

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

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P R 211835Z MAY 75

FM AMCONSUL PARAMARIBO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2022

INFO AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMCONSUL CURACAO

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E.O.11652:NA

TAGS: PFOR NL NS

SUBJECT: NEW DISORDERS AGGRAVATE RACIAL STRAINS

REF : A. PARAMARIBO 0222; B. PARAMARIBO 0219; C. PARAMARIBO 0216

1. FIRES WHICH LEVELLED HALF BLOCK OF LARGE FRAME BUILDINGS AND CHARRED OTHERS IN CENTER OF TOWN LAST NIGHT DAMPENED NEW-FOUND OPTUMISM THAT SERIOUS RACIAL TROUBLES CAN BE AVERTED AND REDUCED GOOD EFFECT TALKS BETWEEN GOVERNING COALITION AND OPPOSITION WERE ALREADY HAVING. POLITICAL, SECURITY AND LABOR SOURCES AGREE TENSIONS BETWEEN CREOLES AND EAST INDIANS NOW HIGHER THAN EVER AFTER BRIEF RESPITE.

2. BLAZE BURNED DOWN OLD LANDMARK HOTEL, PHARMACY, OTHER BUILDINGS, AND THREATENED HOUSE OCCUPIED BY MOTHER OF GOVERNOR FERRIER, WHO ON SCENE TOGETHER WITH MINPRES ARRON, OTHER CABINET MEMBERS WHO ADJOURNED REALM TALKS WITH DUTCH IN NEARBY HOTEL TO

OBSERVE DESTRUCTION. WORD QUICKLY SPREAD THROUGH MAINLY CREOLE ONLOOKERS THAT HINDUSTANIS RESPONSIBLE FOR WORST FIRE IN RECENT SERIES.

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3. SOME 400 YOUNG CREOLES GATHERED BEFORE MINPRES ARRON'S

OFFICE THIS MORNING TO DEMAND ACTION AGAINST ARSONISTS AND
DISPERSED ONLY AFTER ARRON PROMISED PUNISHMENT OF CULPRITS
AND APPEALED FOR CALM. HIS REMARK BROADCAST ON GOT. RADIO
THIS AFTERNOON. POLICE SOURCES SAY SEVERAL HINDUSTANIS
BEATEN BY CREOLES OUT LOOKING FOR TROUBLE. BUSINESSES CONTINUE
OPERATING NORMALLY, IN GENERAL, THOUGH ALL POSSESSING THEM HAVE
SECURITY GRILLS IN PLACE. FEW CHINESE GOLD AND SILVER SHOPS
SHUTTERED.

4. GOS INTELLIGENCE CHIEF TOLD ME TODAY THAT XINPRES VAN
GENDEREN, ECONMIN BRUMA AND OTHER CABINET MEMBERS WITH WHOM
HE DISCUSSED FIRES LAST NIGHT ARE ANGRY AND QUESTIONED USE-
FULNESS OF FURTHER TALKS WITH OPPOSITION. THEY BLAME LATTER
FOR SETTING STAGE FOR THESE EVENTS BY USE OF PARTISAN RHETORIC
WHICH AROUSED EXTREMIST ELEMENTS IN VHP. MODERATES STATEN
SPEAKER WIJNTUIN AND VHP CO-VICECHAIRMAN HINDOORIE BADLY SHAKEN
BY SET-BACK. "THESE THINGS ARE DESTROYING EVERYTHING WE'VE ACCOMP-
LISHED LAST FEW DAYS," SAID HINDOORIE. BOTH SEEKING MEANS MAIN-
TAIN BRIEF GAIN IN RACIAL HARMONY ACHIEVED THROUGH NPK-VHP
TALKS.

5. MEANWHILE, POLICE HAVE ARRESTED SEVEN HINDUSTANIS FOR COM-
PLICITY IN FIRES AND COUNT EXPECTED TO GO TO FIFTEEN OR SO
TODAY, ACCORDING INTELLIGENCE CHIEF. INCLUDED ARE A REPORTER OF
HINDUSTANI RADIO STATION AND SEVERAL INDIAN SCHOOL TEACHERS.
SECURITY HEAD BELIEVES ARSON MIGHT HAVE BEEN AVOIDED IF XIN
JUSTICE AND POLICE HOOST HAD ACTED SOONER ON EVIDENCE
THAT HOUNG VHP ULTRAS HAD DISCUSSED MEANS OF "BURNING DOWN
PARAMARIBO" TO SHOW GOS AND VISITING DUTCH DELEGATION THAT
INDIAN INTERESTS CANNOT BE TRAMPLED UPON BY CREOLES. HE CONVINCED
VHP CHAIRMAN LACHMON, THOUGH ABLE CALL OFF PLANNED MAY 19
DEMONSTRATION AND SHUT-DOWN, HAS LOST CONTROL OF EXTREMIST
FACTION OF INDIAN YOUTH TO OTHER VHP CO-CHAIRMAN, ALWIN MINGRA,
WHOM HE BELIEVES CHIEFLY RESPONSIBLE FOR INCITEMENT, AT LEAST.

6. COMMENT: MOSTLY WOODEN PARAMARIBO HAS LONG HISTORY OF
POLITICALLY INSPIRED FIRES AND ARSON IS ACT MOST CALCULATED TO
SET TOWN'S INHABITANTS ON EDGE. IN RECENT YEARS, THERE HAS BEEN
INCREASED RECOGNITION THAT CITY HAS UNIQUE HERITAGE IN OLD TIMBER
PUBLIC BUILDINGS AND HOUSES. THUS WIDE ATTRIBUTION OF BURNINGS TO
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ONE RACIAL GROUP OBVIOUSLY CARRIES SEEDS OF SERIOUS COMMUNAL
DISORDERS.. BUT, IF GOS LEADERSHIP PROMPTLY MOVES TO CALM RACIAL
PASSIONS, AND OVER-EXTENDED POLICE CAN PREVENT FURTHER OUTRAGES,
IT WILL BE TOO EARLY WRITE OFF PROSPECT OF SLOWER RAPPROACHMENT
BETWEEN COALITION AND OPPOSITIONN.
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